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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their May 23 news coverage on Beijing's formal and positive response to President Ma Ying-jeou's inaugural speech, on the Cabinet's decision Thursday on fuel and electricity hikes, and on the opening and acceleration of exchanges across the Taiwan Strait. The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" ran a news story on page four with the headline "Ma: Washington 'Pleased' by Development of the Situation in Taiwan."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" slammed President Ma and some of his moves and said Ma is trying to "get rid of Taiwan, rip Taiwan off of its sovereignty and turn Taiwan into a local government." An editorial in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily," however, praised Ma for having taken the correct first step. An analysis in the pro-unification "United Daily News" said Beijing has demonstrated a relaxing and friendlier attitude toward Taiwan, but it will not easily make concessions before the kick-off of cross-Strait talks. End summary.

A) "No More Fighting for Taiwan's National Survival and Development?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 700,000] editorialized (5/23):

"... In his inaugural speech, President Ma mentioned Taiwan many times, but throughout the logical arrangement of his entire speech, [one finds that] Taiwan has become a geographical name rather than an independent sovereign nation. The country that Ma identifies with is not Taiwan, but the Republic of China (ROC) outlined in the ROC Constitution, which includes mainland China and Republic of Mongolia. ... Judging from a series of moves aimed at political struggles and changing [Taiwan's] national identity, such as removing the word 'Taiwan' from the official stamp commemorating Ma's inauguration and the webpage of the Presidential Office, as well as the decision of not to apply for the island's membership in the UN using the name 'Taiwan,' [what Ma has been doing], in short, is to 'get rid of Taiwan,' 'rip Taiwan off of its sovereignty,' to 'Sinicize Taiwan,' and also to 'turn [Taiwan] into a local government.' ..."

B) "China Offers Positive Response"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] editorialized (5/23):

"... China's goodwill gesture is a big gift to Ma on his inauguration, and the Ma Administration obviously needs to show reciprocity. In this vein, both sides of the Taiwan Strait will perhaps go beyond the various historical models, such as the United Kingdom model, commonwealth, federation, dominion, etc, and create a new, alternate interactive model for countries that split with each other. Of course, the pre-condition is that Ma must insist on the principle that the Republic of China is an independent sovereignty,

or it will be akin to being annexed [by China]. For Taiwan, the one and only foreign policy is to [follow] realism. As a result, it must be tilted toward the United States and befriend China and not confront the United States and oppose China, as the [Chen Shui-Bian] administration did. Ma's first step is in the right direction."

C) "Chen [Yunlin] Echoes Ma in Choice of Words and Ideas"

Journalist Wang Li-chuan noted in an analysis in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (5/23):

"... President Ma advocates reconciliation and truce between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and more elbow room for Taiwan in the international community. Beijing, [in return], has adopted a strategy of dodging and no [direct] response, using real action to show that it is 'putting aside differences.' It is evident that Beijing's attitude is relaxing and its choice of words very friendly, whereas its position remains firm. It is unlikely that Beijing will make any concession regarding issues of principle before the kick-off of cross-Strait talks. ..."

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